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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, MAY 31, 2007

#### In Today's Papers

Constitutional Court to File Complaint against Erdogan  
All papers report Turkey's Constitutional Court will seek criminal charges against Prime Minister Erdogan after the PM criticized the court for blocking the presidential election, the high court's President Tulay Tugcu said. On Tuesday, Erdogan described as "a disgrace" the Constitutional Court ruling that forced the cancellation of the process of election of Turkey's president in the parliament, suggesting the verdict had been politically motivated. "The Prime Minister's remarks ignore the supremacy of law, contain threats and hostility and expose our court as a target for attack," Tugcu told a news conference, adding the PM's remarks "exceed the bounds of respect."

Cumhuriyet reports the Ankara Chief Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation into Erdogan's remarks against the Constitutional Court, which might constitute a violation of Article 301 of Turkish Penal Code, the article which criminalizes "insulting Turkishness" and under which many prominent journalists have been prosecuted. A decision by parliament, where the ruling AKP has a large majority, is needed to strip the PM of his immunity from prosecution.

Turkey on US Handover of Security in North Iraq  
Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) spokesman Levent Bilman said with regard to the handover of security responsibility to the regional Kurdish administration in northern Iraq, "What is important for Turkey is the handover of security responsibilities to the central Iraqi government rather than diverse ethnic groups and local forces."

#### Tukey-Iraq Relations

Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report Ambassador Oguz Celikkol, Turkey's special envoy for Iraq, said on his return home after leading a Turkish delegation to Baghdad that Iraqi officials understand Ankara's concerns over terrorism and the

PKK presence in northern Iraq. Celikkol said he conveyed a letter from Prime Minister Erdogan to his Iraqi counterpart concerning the PKK and documents showing that explosives used by the terrorist organization were coming from Iraq.

Meanwhile, papers report the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) has turned down requests from Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) to visit Ankara for talks, saying the heated political debates and the upcoming parliamentary elections at home did not allow such meetings.

#### MFA on US Violation of Turkish Airspace

Hurriyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Yeni Safak and others report the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) spokesman Levent Bilman told a weekly press briefing yesterday that Washington has acknowledged Turkey's airspace had been violated, however the violation was inadvertent. Responding to a question, Bilman said in diplomacy it was not significant that the note was given to a lower level diplomat rather than the American chief of mission, stressing what mattered was the wording of the demarche. Meanwhile, Milliyet reports an unidentified State Department official said Washington told Ankara the US applied temporary flight restrictions for US pilots responsible for the "unintentional violation of Turkish airspace" on May 24.

#### Editorial Commentary on Turkey-US Ties, the PKK in Northern Iraq

Semih Idiz observes in the mainstream daily Milliyet: "The tension between the Turkish and US militaries over the F-16 violation of Turkish air space is proof of the deteriorating Turkey-US relations. Since the implementation of the Truman Doctrine, Turkey-US relations have been based on bilateral military relations. For half

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a century, the Turkish and American militaries have always acted together in every field including bilateral and multilateral operational issues, so it is obvious that the weakening military relations will have a negative impact on bilateral political relations. At the moment, the diplomats of both countries are exerting efforts to improve relations; however, bilateral relations have entered a course of their own, beyond the stage that diplomats can resolve. I believe that the US is responsible for relations having reached this point because it has taken Turkey for granted on every issue. It was a vital mistake for the US to think that it could drag its feet concerning the PKK. Unfortunately, bilateral relations are being dragged toward a dangerous and unclear future."

Erdal Safak commented in the mainstream daily Sabah: "The shadow war conducted through the secret services of the US and Iran is gradually intensifying. President Bush recently instructed the CIA to carry out operations to destabilize Iran. Through these instructions, he gave a green light to any destructive action against Iran, including sabotage. A few days after these instructions, Iranian officials announced that CIA members had filtered into central and southwest Iran for sabotage activities. Allegedly, there were PJAK members among those CIA members. The issue sounds rather complicated, but let me explain. Those hiding out on Mount Kandil are called PJAK members when they go to Iran and are supported by both the US and Iraq. When they cross into Syria, they are regarded as members of the Democratic Unity Party and again supported by the US and Iraq. When they move into Baghdad, Erbil, Kirkuk, Mosul or Suleymanie, they are regarded as members of the Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party (PCDK). As of yesterday these forces joined the Northern Iraqi Forces as well! Finally, those on Mount Kandil are referred to as PKK members when they cross into Turkey. Actually, Kandil is a logistical center and those on the mountain are moved wherever they are needed. Turkey is angry with the US for not resolving the Kandil issue. I wonder whether the US will ever resolve this issue."

#### PKK Says Ankara Bombing Actually Targeted TGS

Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports Feyman Huseyin, the leader of the PKK's military wing HPG, told the group's website that the suicide bombing in Ankara earlier this month actually targeted the Turkish General Staff (TGS.) Huseyin said the bombing had been made

in retaliation for Turkish anti-Kurdish policies, and warned such attacks could continue.

#### Students Perform Muslim Prayer in High School

Milliyet and Radikal report students in a public high school in the Bagcilar neighborhood in Istanbul prayed along with their teacher in a room in the school's basement which had been turned into a prayer room (Mescit), with boys and girls taking turns to perform the Muslim prayer, "namaz." The incident was reportedly exposed earlier this month by a family who managed to secretly record the prayers on camera after noticing a sudden change in their daughter, who decided to cover her head and join prayers with some students and teachers in the school. The provincial education director in Istanbul said an investigation has been launched into the claims.

#### TV Highlights

NTV, 6.00 A.M.

#### Domestic News

- Turkish police have detained an 11-member al-Qaida logistics team in operations in the Avcilar, Bagcilar, Kucukcekmece and Umraniye districts in Istanbul, seizing forged passports and ID cards.

- Some 100,000 Turks are expected to make the Muslim pilgrimage "Hajj" to Saudi Arabia this year.

- The AKP government's plan to reduce value-added tax on food and tourism by 10 percent will cost the Treasury 800 million Turkish

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lira.

- Turkey prepares to import cheap automobiles from China.

#### International News

- European Court of Human Rights has rejected the objection of Greek Cypriot Myra Xenides-Arestis to the court decision for referring her property complaints to the property commission established by Turkish Cypriot authorities.

- EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn welcomed the decision of French President Sarkozy not to block the expected opening June 26 of three new areas of negotiations between the EU and Turkey.

- The Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, told an Italian newspaper the European community can accept the membership of an overwhelming Islamic society such as Turkey.

- EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Louis Michel said Turkey's EU entry bid cannot be reversed.

WILSON